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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PRAGUE 000058

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SUBJECT: CZECHS EMBRACE TRANSFORMATION DIPLOMACY AND  
DEMOCRACY PROMOTION

REF: 05 PRAGUE 1614

Classified By: A/DCM Michael Dodman for reasons 1.4 b+d.

¶1. (U) Summary and comment. Democracy promotion is at the heart of Czech foreign policy. Because GOCR efforts complement U.S. transformational diplomacy efforts, the Czechs are natural partners for cooperation in countries such as Cuba, Belarus, and Iraq. January 25-27, 2006, Gabriela Dlouha, Director of the Czech MFA Transformation Promotion Unit will visit Washington to meet with counterparts at the State Department, USAID, and NGOs to explore opportunities for cooperation on democracy promotion. As background for these meetings, this cable provides the "nuts-n-bolts" of the Czech approach to democracy promotion. Details of current Czech democracy promotion projects in Cuba, Belarus and Eastern Europe, and Iraq will be provided septel. A septel on Czech humanitarian assistance is also planned. End summary and comment.

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Democracy Promotion: A Legacy and The Right Thing to Do  
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¶2. (U) Czech government officials and NGOs alike claim that Czechs have a moral obligation to help others struggling to be free because of their own peaceful transition to democracy in 1989. However, the GOCR also recognizes the security benefits of democracy promotion: the Czech Security Strategy identifies the promotion of "freedom, democracy, and the principles of rule of law" as a strategic national interest. The Czechs also acknowledge that democracy promotion is a niche capability that enhances the reputation of the Czech Republic in the international community.

¶3. (U) Czechs use the phrase "transformation cooperation" to refer to democracy promotion in third countries through bilateral efforts and multilateral cooperation. According to the MFA, the primary characteristic of transformation cooperation is the "systematic cooperation with civil society" in the target country. Because the focus is on civil society, Czechs believe that contacts with the official government authorities may be deliberately excluded.

¶4. (U) The key partners in Czech transformational diplomacy are the MFA, People in Need (PIN), former Czech President Vaclav Havel, and the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba (ICDC). As described below, the nexus between these partners is deep-seated and personal, which helps to explain the sophistication of the Czech effort.

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"TRANS" Mandate and Projects  
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¶5. (U) The Transformation Cooperation Unit (TRANS) is the MFA department responsible for democracy promotion. As described below, TRANS works in partnership with People in Need (PIN) and other Czech NGOs to help civil society in priority countries plan for their own successful "velvet revolution."

¶6. (C) According to TRANS Director, Gabriela Dlouha, TRANS projects complement Czech political and diplomatic efforts to promote democracy. Hence, transformation cooperation has a political focus, unlike traditional development, which may not. Thus, priority countries for TRANS projects are selected on the basis of their importance to Czech foreign policy priorities. The current priority countries for TRANS programming and funding are: Belarus, Bosnia, Burma, Cuba, Georgia, Iraq, Moldova, Serbia, and Ukraine.

¶7. (U) TRANS monitors the status of democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms in these priority countries. As needed, TRANS identifies projects to establish and reinforce democratic institutions in these countries (primarily through educating civil society and supporting peaceful opposition).

¶8. (U) NGO partnership is an important aspect of Czech transformation cooperation. TRANS selects NGO partners to provide the expertise and staffing necessary to implement these projects. PIN is currently the primary TRANS partner thanks to connections between TRANS and PIN described below, and PIN's substantial experience working in the priority countries. However, TRANS works with other Czech NGOs, foreign NGOs, Czech political groups, Czech educational institutions, and even individuals.

¶9. (U) Another hallmark of the TRANS program is joint financing. TRANS typically provides up to 80% funding for its

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projects. The NGO partner is expected to provide additional funding. In 2006, TRANS will manage a budget of approximately \$1.3 million. Of that amount, roughly \$487,500 will fund existing projects, primarily in Iraq (e.g., the training program in Jordan) (reftel); \$487,500 will fund new projects; and \$325,000 will be held in reserve to fund emergency projects and general needs, such as TRANS publications.

¶10. (C) Although PIN was the primary recipient of TRANS funds in 2005, the TRANS funding process was recently formalized to make it more transparent and competitive. TRANS issued a request for proposals for 2006 projects on December 15, 2005. Proposals are due in February 2006, and will be reviewed by a committee formed for that purpose, composed of members of TRANS, MFA territorial representatives, and external experts. Grants awarded will be announced in March 2006.

¶11. (C) According to Dlouha, TRANS prefers to fund targeted, small, short-term projects because they are easier for NGO partners to implement, and harder for host governments to impede. Other hallmarks of TRANS projects are: they increase capabilities of Czech NGOs, can be replicated easily in other countries, and often take place in the Czech Republic (which has the advantage of providing a safe training location, access to experienced trainers, and allows program oversight).

¶12. (U) TRANS projects are tailored to the individual needs of the target country, and typically include:

- Educating civil society on fields of key importance (e.g., economics, self-governance, judicial reform, defense, social systems, police and military reform, restitution and privatization issues);

- Promoting free elections (by supporting multi-party systems, political dissent, and election monitoring; and by promoting free media and training journalists);

- Providing financial assistance to the persecuted; and

-- Creating public awareness (through conferences, cultural events, foreign government briefings, etc.)

¶13. (U) Septel will discuss specific TRANS-funded work in greater detail.

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TRANS Partners  
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¶14. (U) The links between TRANS, PIN, President Havel, and the ICDC are many. To begin with, it is worth noting that the founders of TRANS are Gabriela Dlouha, Tomas Pojar, Simon Panek, and Petr Kolar. Dlouha is the Director of TRANS, and a former staffer of President Havel. She reports to Pojar, MFA Deputy FM for Bilateral Affairs, who has ties to PIN: he is a former PIN Director, and PIN's current Executive Director. Panek is PIN's current Director and its Founder. And Kolar is the new Czech Ambassador to the U.S., and was Pojar's predecessor as Deputy FM. All are personal friends of President Havel. (Note: in addition to Dlouha's visit to Washington January 25-27, Deputy FM Pojar intends to hold consultations in Washington during the week of February 19, following his participation in a meeting of Western Hemisphere Czech Ambassadors to be held in Miami.)

¶15. (U) PIN is the largest NGO in Central Europe, and has administered over \$55 million in its 12-year history. It has multiple funding sources in addition to the GOCR, including the EU, National Endowment for Democracy, etc. PIN's mission has a dual focus: to provide humanitarian relief to people in need, and to promote democratic freedoms. With respect to the latter, PIN claims it has a "special commitment to supporting groups and people working against totalitarian regimes." PIN supports dissidents in target countries the same way Czech dissidents were helped during the Communist era: namely, by supporting political prisoners and their families; documenting torture, executions, and crimes against humanity; and supporting human rights.

¶16. (U) Former President Havel uses his international reputation to promote democracy and human rights globally, and continues to be the driving force behind Czech democracy promotion efforts. One example of his influence is the recent report he and Desmond Tutu commissioned on Burma, which succeeded in drawing the world's attention to the gravity of the situation there. Notably, President Havel has focused much of his energy on Cuba. In 2003, following Castro's brutal crackdown on dissident groups, President Havel founded

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the International Committee for Democracy in Cuba (ICDC), below.

¶17. (U) The ICDC is an assembly of international leaders committed to democracy in Cuba, including President Havel, Madeleine Albright, and former presidents and prime ministers from Latin American and European countries. ICDC's goals are to: (1) show political solidarity with Cuban dissidents, (2) provide economic support to political prisoners, (3) create a commission of experts to help the Cuban people in their own transition, and (4) change public opinion in Latin America and Europe. It is worth noting that TRANS funds the ICDC, and PIN provides offices and staff for the ICDC secretariat.

¶18. (U) While PIN is the largest and best known Czech NGO, there are many others operating in the area of democracy promotion. TRANS has expressed a desire to expand Czech NGO capacity, which means that TRANS funds will increasingly be disbursed to qualified NGOs in addition to PIN.

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Other Czech Initiatives  
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¶19. (U) Although not the subject of this cable, the Czech

MFA, under the leadership of FM Cyril Svoboda, also promotes democracy via traditional diplomatic channels, such as by supporting pro-democracy initiatives in the EU, the UN, and as part of the transatlantic dialogue. The GOCR also participates in the OSCE and Communities of Democracies, for example by providing and training election monitors. And Czech military forces promote regional stability in places where democracy is taking root, such as in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

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